

Being associated with *Approach* was the farthest thing from my mind in 1968 when I entered the Navy. I barely knew what the name was. But, I've spent more than 30 years in naval aviation as an editor, historian, author, book reviewer, and naval reserve officer. Now, it's time to hand over the controls to someone else. I don't regret stepping down; it's time to move on. But, I'm thankful for the chance to have worked on *Approach* for the last 16 years.

There's a reason why Navy and Marine Corps wings mean so much, and why as the current operators you must preserve that heritage. Sometimes we do dumb things; sometimes we live in spite of ourselves. We must never stop looking around and checking our individual and collective actions. It's the only way to survive. *Approach* helps us question, learn and remember, whether it involves something that happened one year ago or 20 years ago. Usually, the lessons go beyond a statute of limitations.

I want to simply wish all of you the best and safest careers you can have. I hope that you find the satisfaction and dedication to your jobs and craft I have. It isn't always easy, nor is it always clear what you're accomplishing at any time. But you can and do make differences depending on how you conduct yourselves as members of the Navy, Corps, or Coast Guard, and how you fly your aircraft, whether as pilot, NFO, or crewman.



Above all, remember that *Approach* is your magazine. Keep contributing those stories that make it the best safety magazine in the world.

Peter Mersky

